

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MANAMA 02112 01 OF 02 291003Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 MCE-00 EB-08
ACDA-07 /066 W
-----083575 291016Z /11

R 290830Z SEP 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5245
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CHUSMTM DHAHRAN
DOD WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAMA 2112

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, BA, SA
SUBJECT: BAHRAIN REQUESTS ARMS

REF: A. STATE 220667 B. STATE 211694 C. CHUSMTM 201314Z SEP 77
D. STATE 219190 E9 MANAMA 1878

1. AMBASSADOR MET SEPT 28 WITH HEIR APPARENT/DEFENSE
MINISTER SHAIKH HAMAD AND BDF CHIEF OF STAFF COL.
KHALIFA TO DISCUSS DEFENSE SURVEY REPORT AND LIST
OF EQUIPMENT REQUESTS WHICH SHAIKH HAMAD SUBMITTED
TO EMBASSY BY LETTER SEPT 25. SHAIKH HAMAD ASKED
FOR SPEEDY RESPONSES, AT LEAST IN PRINCIPLE, ON
FOLLOWING ITEMS:

A. TOW ANTI-TANK MISSILES (240 PRACTICE AND 700
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SECRET

PAGE 02 MANAMA 02112 01 OF 02 291003Z

LIVE) WITH 18 LAUNCHERS;
B. "COMPLETE IMPROVED" HAWK AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM;
C. 32 REDEYE MISSILES;
D. ONE BATTERY TOWED VULCANS;
E. 20 HARPOON MISSILES (SHAIKH HAMAD SAID BDF
CLOSE TO A DECISION ON BUYING SUITABLE PLATFORM
FOR THESE MISSILES. SAID BRITISH, GERMANS, AND

FRENCH ARE WILLING TO SELL BOATS SUITABLE FOR THE PURPOSE).

2. SHAIKH HAMAD SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT FIXED WING AIRCRAFT NOT IN BDF'S FUTURE AND MADE STRONG PITCH FOR HAWK AND REDEYE AS ACCEPTABLE SUBSTITUTES FOR DEFENSE OF BAHRAIN'S VITAL INSTALLATIONS, REFINERY, ALUMINUM SMELTER, AND OIL FIELDS, AGAINST AIR ATTACK. HE STRESSED THAT BAHRAIN HAWK SYSTEM WOULD AND SHOULD BE TIED INTO SAUDI HAWK SYSTEM FOR DEFENSE OF AREA'S RESOURCES. THROUGHOUT DISCUSSION SHAIKH HAMAD STRESSED HIS DESIRE TO BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE "SOMETHING" TO REGIONAL DEFENSE AND HIS STRONG PREFERENCE TO DO SO WITH U.S. EQUIPMENT SIMILAR TO THAT ON WHICH SAG HAS STANDARDIZED. HE SAID THAT LONG DELAY IN RECEIPT OF SURVEY REPORT HAS HELD UP BDF PLANNING AND, THEREFORE, HE HOPED EARLY ANSWERS TO THESE REQUESTS WOULD BE POSSIBLE.

3. AMBASSADOR AGREED THAT SURVEY REPORT HAD BEEN UNDULY DELAYED AND THAT USG APPRECIATED PLANNING PROBLEMS THIS HAD CREATED FOR BDF. THEN, DRAWING ON RELEVANT REFTELS, AMBASSADOR OUTLINED GOALS AND CONSTRAINTS OF OUR ARMS SALES POLICIES, GENERALLY AND FOR LOWER GULF, AND INFORMED SHAIKH HAMAD THAT BOTH TOW AND HARPOON

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 MANAMA 02112 01 OF 02 291003Z

WOULD NOT BE APPROVED FOR SALE TO BAHRAIN. COL. KHALIFA PREVIOUSLY HAD MENTIONED TO EMBOFF THAT UAE WOULD BE GETTING TOW SO AMBASSADOR MADE POINT OF MENTIONING THAT TOW WOULD NOT BE SOLD TO UAE. THOUGH CLEARLY DISAPPOINTED, NEITHER SHAIKH HAMAD NOR COL. KHALIFA SEEMED SURPRISED BY NEGATIVE RESPONSES ON TOW AND HARPOON.

4. AMBASSADOR THAN TURNED CONVERSATION TO 2.75 INCH AIR-TO-GROUND ROCKETS WHICH SAG HAD REQUESTED ON BDF'S BEHALF AND TO QUESTION OF HELICOPTERS, WHICH WERE NOT LISTED AMONG ITEMS REQUESTED. SHAIKH HAMAD WAS ASSURED THAT SAG NOW UNDERSTANDS THAT WHILE IT MAY BE FINANCING ROCKETS, REQUEST FOR PURCHASE MUST BE MADE DIRECTLY TO USG. HE SAID HE WOULD WRITE TO PRINCE SULTAN TO CONFIRM THIS AND TO GET "DETAILS"

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PAGE 01 MANAMA 02112 02 OF 02 291009Z

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 MANAMA 2112

OF ROCKET PURCHASE WHICH HE WOULD, IN TURN, SUBMIT
TO EMBASSY. APPARENTLY, SAUDIS HAD NOT TOLD BDF HOW
MANY ROCKETS SAG WOULD BUY FOR BAHRAIN OR OTHER DETAILS
OF THE TRANSACTION.

5. CONVERSATION SHED SOME LIGHT ON QUESTION OF TWELVE
AGUSTA-BELL 212S WHICH BDF OFFICERS HAVE IN PAST SAID
WERE ON ORDER. SHAIKH HAMAD SAID THAT NOT ONLY ARE SAUDIS
PAYING FOR THESE HELICOPTERS BUT THAT ORDER HAS BEEN
PLACED BY SAG. COL. KHALIFA CONFIRMED THAT ORDER IS
FOR MILITARY VERSION EQUIPPED TO FIRE THE 2.75 INCH
ROCKETS. AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED THAT USG WAS UNAWARE
EITHER FROM SAG OR FROM AGUSTA-BELL THAT SUCH AN ORDER
HAD BEEN PLACED; SAG WOULD NEED USG PERMISSION TO
TRANSFER HELICOPTERS TO BDF AND AGUSTA-BELL WOULD NEED
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MANAMA 02112 02 OF 02 291009Z

MUNITIONS CONTROL LICENSE TO EXPORT
MILITARY VERSION OF 212. BOTH SHAIKH AND COL. SEEMED
A BIT CONFUSED BY WHAT MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT BE HAPPEN-
ING WITH HELICOPTERS THEY HAD FELT WERE FIRMLY IN THE
SAG-FINANCED PIPELINE. WOULD APPRECIATE ANY LIGHT

JIDDA, DEPT OR CHUSMTM COULD SHED ON THIS POINT.

6. MEETING CONCLUDED WITH SHAIKH HAMAD AGAIN MAKING STRONG PLEA FOR USG RESPONSES, MOST PARTICULARLY ON HAWK AND REDEYE, WHICH WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR BAHRAIN TO PLAY RESPECTABLE ROLE IN REGIONAL DEFENSE WHICH HE SAID HE UNDERSTANDS IS U.S. POLICY AND IN INTERESTS OF USG AND ITS FRIENDS IN THE AREA. AMBASSADOR SAID HE WOULD REPORT DISCUSSION FULLY TO WASHINGTON AND URGE EARLY RESPONSE.

7. COMMENT: BDF IS MOST POORLY EQUIPPED OF FORCES OF LOWER GULF AND SHAIKH HAMAD FEELS STRONG PRESSURE WITHIN HIMSELF AND FROM HIS OFFICERS TO MAKE A BETTER SHOWING. STRONG EMPHASIS WHICH SHAIKH PLACED ON HAWK AND REDEYE STEMMED FROM HIS DESIRE TO BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO REGIONAL DEFENSE IN WHAT HE SAW AS LOGICAL WAY. BAHRAIN RECEIVES ONE-HALF OF INCOME FROM SAUDI ARABIA'S ABU SAFAH OIL FIELD AND, BY UNDERWATER PIPELINE, SOME 200,000 BARRELS PER DAY OF OTHER SAUDI CRUDE FOR CALTEX REFINERY HERE. SHAIKH HAMAD FELT BAHRAIN SHOULD BE IN POSITION TO CONTRIBUTE TO SAUDI ARABIA'S DEFENSE OF THESE RESOURCES AND INSTALLATIONS. WOULD APPRECIATE EARLY DEPT AND DOD ASSESSMENT OF VALUE AND POSSIBILITY OF INTEGRATING, IN SMALL WAY, BAHRAINI AND EASTERN PROVINCE AIR DEFENSES.

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PAGE 03 MANAMA 02112 02 OF 02 291009Z

8. SHAIKH HAMAD ASSUMED WE ARE WILLING TO SELL 212 HELICOPTER WING AND 2.75 ROCKETS AND HISTORY OF OUR DISCUSSIONS AND SURVEYS SUPPORTS HIS ASSUMPTION. BOTH HE AND COL. KHALIFA SEEMED DETERMINED TO ACQUIRE MISSILE BOATS AN WE ASSUME THEY WILL LOOK FOR A SELLER RATHER THAN ASK TO BUY SMALLER BOATS OUR SURVEY RECOMMENDED.

9. EMBASSY SUPPORTS LIMITED EXPANSION OF BDF AS OUTLINED IN DOD SURVEY REPORT AND BELIEVES OUR REFUSAL TO SELL TOW AND HARPOON WAS SOUND. NEW ELEMENT, WHICH WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO ASSESS, IS WHETHER BAHRAIN'S HIGHER GROUND AND VERY CLOSE PROXIMITY TO EASTERN PROVINCE OIL FIELDS, COULD BE USEFUL AIR DEFENSE SITE FOR THE REGION. IF IT COULD, AND SAUDIS ARE WILLING TO FINANCE IT, WE WOULD SUPPORT BDF ACQUISITION OF THIS ROLE.

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